(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Alliance Air operates 4 flights per week with B-737 aircraft on Delhi-Raipur-Vizag-Chennai and return route. The average number of passengers carried per flight on Delhi-Raipur-Delhi sector has been as follows:-

Year	Delhi/Raipur	Raipur/Delhi
2004-05	68	50
2005-06 (April-June, 05)	65	43

(b) to (d) Alliance Air has no plans, at present, to increase frequency of operations on Delhi-Raipur-Delhi route due to operational constraints.

Extension of runway at Silchar airport

2204. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Task Force constituted in 1998 recommended extension of runways at Silchar, Lilabari and Dibrugarh airport on priority by AAI to a minimum of 7500 feet to enable safe operation of A-320 type aircraft;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Silchar Airport runway has not yet been extended besides others;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when, the extension work is expected to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The work for extension of runway and other associated works at Silchar Airport has been awarded in March, 2005. The work is under execution. The length of the runway at Lilabari airport has been extended to 7500 feet while the work for extension of runway at Dibrugarh airport to 7500 feet is going ahead.

(d) The work of extension of runway at Silchar airport is likely to be completed by March, 2007.

Increase in air passenger

2205. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of private airlines have been permitted to operate within and outside the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether as a result, air passengers have increased manifold;

(d) if so, the details in this regard for last three years;

(e) whether the existing infrastructure and facilities at the airports are inadequate to handle the increased air passengers traffic and on account of which the operators as well as the passengers face a lot of hardship; and

(f) if so, how the congestion is proposed to be reduced and passenger convenience enhanced at the airports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. M/s Jet Airways (India) Ltd., M/s Sahara Airlines Ltd., M/s Deccan Aviation Pvt. Ltd., M/s Kingfisher Airlines Ltd., M/s Spicejet Ltd. and M/s Blue Dart Aviation Ltd. (Cargo) have been permitted to operate within the country. Besides M/s Jet Airways (India) Ltd. and M/s Sahara Airlines Ltd. have also been permitted to operate on specified international routes.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. The number of passengers handled by the top 45 operational airports in the country during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are 43723324, 48779611 and 59283800 respectively.

(e) and (f) Yes Sir. Modernization and development of infrastructure facilities at the airports is a continuous process and is undertaken on the operational requirements for safety of aircraft operation and demand from airlines. To meet the growing demand, development works viz. expansion and modification of terminal buildings, extension and development of runways, construction of additional parking stands etc. have been taken